

Exhibit 2

Monday, January 25, 2016

Q&A: Rob Manfred reflects on his 1-year anniversary as MLB commissioner

By Jerry Crasnick
ESPN.com

Rob Manfred's legacy as Major League Baseball's 10th commissioner is yet to be defined. But in his first 365 days on the job, he crossed off an awful lot of items from his to-do list.

After an extended run as MLB's chief labor lawyer, Manfred succeeded Bud Selig as commissioner one year ago today. During his first year, the [Kansas City Royals](#) won their first World Series in 30 years with the game's 16th-biggest payroll and an emphasis on homegrown talent. MLB cut six minutes from the average game time with the implementation of new pace-of-play rules, and Manfred dispensed with the most controversial issue on his plate when he rejected Pete Rose's bid for reinstatement.

In August, MLB announced a new domestic violence policy, which will serve as a framework as Manfred contemplates discipline for alleged offenders [Aroldis Chapman](#), [Yasiel Puig](#) and [Jose Reyes](#). In addition, MLB is looking at ways to ensure fan safety in the aftermath of injuries from foul balls. It will also address middle infielder safety after Pittsburgh's [Jung Ho Kang](#) and the [New York Mets'](#) [Ruben Tejada](#) suffered serious injuries on aggressive takeout slides.

Manfred has stressed the importance of reaching out to America's youth, and he made a symbolic gesture before the 2015 season opener in Washington when he invited a 9-year-old fan [to throw out the ceremonial first pitch at Nationals Park](#).

MLB 2.0: Reimagining baseball

Szymborski: [Robot umpires behind home plate](#)

Stark: [Ban the save in favor of a new stat](#)

Crasnick: [International expansion teams](#)

Schoenfield: [Adopt expanded rotating rosters](#)

Marchand: [Limit visits to the pitching mound](#)

Strang: [Mandatory dugout-to-dugout netting](#)

Blengino: [MLB should pay minor leaguers more](#)

Kahrl: [Find new homes for the A's and Rays](#)

Caple: [Keep replay from going too far](#)

Kurkjian: [Make teams take infield before every game](#)

Bowden: [Implement the DH in both leagues](#)

On the business side, baseball continues to embrace new technologies and seek inroads into new markets. In August, MLB spun off its technology arm -- known as BAM Tech -- as an \$8 billion standalone unit. In November, baseball agreed on a three-year deal with Fox that will make in-market games for 15 clubs available via streaming on computers and mobile devices. And three weeks ago, MLB struck another deal, [with Le Sports](#), that will allow 125 games per year to be broadcast in mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau.

Behind the scenes, Manfred has made some personnel changes at MLB's central office in New York and given prime committee assignments to Tampa Bay's Stu Sternberg, Tom Ricketts of the [Chicago Cubs](#), Hal Steinbrenner of the [New York Yankees](#) and other owners who weren't necessarily part of the game's "old boy" network.

Stylistically, Manfred has shown he's comfortable engaging in a running dialogue with both the media and fans. His organizational and persuasion skills will be put to the test this year as MLB and the Players Association negotiate a new collective bargaining agreement to replace the existing deal, which expires Dec. 1. Can Manfred maintain harmony and build upon baseball's momentum with a style that differs from his predecessor?

"Bud Selig was magnificent one-on-one. He was very special," said Marc Ganis, president of the Chicago-based sports consulting firm SportsCorp. "But in the last seven years or so, they pretty much kept him away from larger crowds and the national media. Rob is very comfortable interacting with groups large and small. It's less of an imperial commissionership -- not that Bud Selig is that way personally -- and he's more a man of the people.

"He's comfortable throwing out provocative ideas in December, January and February because it keeps baseball in the consciousness of the public and the media. That has multiple benefits. First, it shows that Major League Baseball is willing to evolve. It also demonstrates how comfortable he is with his knowledge of things. He's willing to have the conversation continue without using an iron fist. I think Rob innately knows that in today's marketplace, you need to be relevant 12 months a year."

As Manfred prepares for his 13th month as commissioner, he sat down with ESPN.com to reflect upon his one-year anniversary and share his thoughts on what lies ahead for MLB in 2016 and beyond.

What have you found to be the biggest difference between your old job as MLB's chief labor lawyer and your new position as commissioner?

The single biggest difference is, this job is about leadership and vision, and my old job was about execution. It's really that simple.

Is it something you could prepare for?

You prepare by observation. You can read and learn about leadership skills, and I've taken a lot of time to do that in the process of the transition. But it was also important that I had observed a number of people do the job through the years, and you learn from each of those experiences. You can read mainstream books about leadership and corporate management. But the tough part about this job is, it really isn't corporate. It's corporate when you're sitting in New York and dealing with the people at 245 Park Ave. and [MLB Advanced Media]. They work for you and they do what you tell them to do. The [challenging] part of this job is the political part. It's another layer of complexity to the job -- the politics of the 30 clubs.

You appear to be soliciting greater input from ownership voices that might not have been as prominent in the past.

We have tried, on the ownership side, to create an atmosphere of open dialogue and participation by all 30 clubs. And I'm hugely positive about the way the 30 clubs have responded to that. You never know quite what to expect when you try to deal with an issue like this differently, because I do deal with it in a very different way than Bud did. While we haven't started at the [negotiating] table yet, we're deep in the preparation process, and I'm really encouraged that a little different approach has created great unity among owners.

What's the biggest difference between your approach and the way Bud Selig handled the job?

The way I would say it is, commissioner Selig built consensus on the basis of individual conversations. I have tried to build consensus through open dialogue and debate.

Reflecting on your first year, what was the toughest decision you had to make?

That's easy: Pete Rose. It is impossible to not recognize that Pete Rose was a great player and an important part of the history of the game, and also to recognize that he had been out of the game and served a very long penalty. That's what you see on one side of the scale. On the other side of the scale, there's a need to never lose sight that your foremost responsibility is to protect the integrity of the play of the game on the field. It was a difficult decision, because you had to sort out exactly what you were deciding. My job was to decide whether he presented a threat to the integrity of the game and whether it might have spillover ramifications on a topic like the Hall of Fame. That made it a very, very difficult decision.

If you could have a "do-over" on anything, what would it be?

I would have been way more negative about the prospect of the DH coming to the National League in my press conference last week [laughs]. I didn't think I was that positive, so obviously I needed to be more negative.

That's interesting. Last year, as you were about to take over as commissioner, you created a stir when you engaged in a dialogue about eliminating defensive shifts, and some media outlets went to town on that.

It's the damndest thing. I made the same mistake on Day 1 and my first anniversary. When I talked about the defensive shifts, I let myself get into a situation where I speculated about a change I wasn't serious about. I made the same mistake this time when I went back and forth on the pros and cons of the DH issue rather than saying what I've said all along -- that I think we're status quo on the DH, because it is the single most important feature that defines the differences between the two leagues. I let myself get into the back and forth and the pros and cons, and that's always a mistake with the press.

So is the message on the future of the DH different than what came out of the owners' meetings in Miami last week?

The most likely result on the designated hitter for the foreseeable future is the status quo. I know [[St. Louis Cardinals](#) general manager] John Mozeliak talked about it, and when you have any National League club talking about it, it's interesting. But I think the vast majority of clubs in the National League want to stay where they are.

Even when opinions get heated, isn't it a positive when people are talking about baseball in January?

One-hundred percent -- people talking about the game is good thing. The dangerous part for me comes at the end. Because you go through the pros and cons, someone thinks you're leaning in one direction or the other. You always have to make it clear after you've gone through the debate and the pros and cons: At the end of the day, I see it as "X." That's the mistake I made last week.

Is there a topic of discussion that fans are more passionate about than you might have realized?

We're going to get stuck on this topic, but I think the DH is one of those topics. I get asked about it a lot, and every time it comes up, it spurs a series of stories as to what's going to happen. In general, people

aren't that passionate about business stuff. The topics they're passionate about are the ones that relate to the play of the game on the field. It's really that simple.

After a year on the job, what would you say is the best perk to being commissioner?

The best part is the access you get to people. I want to be clear about this: I don't mean that you might get to meet a former president or somebody famous. The best part is, you're out in ballparks and real fans want to engage with you all the time. I especially enjoy when those real fans happen to be of the younger variety.

What was your most memorable "commissioner moment" from 2015?

Two things stick out. The first was on Opening day at Nationals Park with [the young man who threw out the first pitch](#). That was phenomenal. The other one that really hit me -- because it was the first time I've done it -- was giving the World Series trophy to David Glass. I'm really fond of David, and there are a lot of symbolic things about that Kansas City win that are important to me. It was a really great moment.

Any significant disappointments in terms of "unfinished business?"

I'm very happy we got a market streaming deal done with the FOX Regional Sports Networks. If we're unable to get the rest of the groups done before the start of the 2016 season, that will be a disappointment to me. I think we'll get it done, but it's been a real grind. I'm glad we've gotten as far as we have on the 15 teams. I desperately would like to finish it up, but it's been a harder process than I thought it was going to be.

This falls under the framework of your mandate to deliver the product to fans in new and more innovative ways, correct?

You have to let people consume the game the way they want to consume the game. It's not a baseball change. It's a media landscape change. People are consuming content -- sports and other content -- very differently than they did 10 years ago. One of the biggest challenges for us going forward is to make sure we can find ways to distribute our games not only in ways that are attuned with the desires of our older, avid fan base, but also attuned to the needs of younger people.

What's your biggest reason to be encouraged about the state of Major League Baseball in years to come?

The most encouraging thing was the response we got to our youth initiative. Our Play Ball events were fantastic. When you have a group like the U.S. Conference of Mayors who joins with you, then immediately re-ups for the next year, it shows we have some traction in that space. I think it portends great things for the game.

You said a year ago that one of your top priorities was strengthening relations with the players. How has that gone?

The challenge is finding the opportunity to have direct communication with players because of the difficulty of the schedule. They're so busy during the season playing 162 games in 183 days, it's hard to find regular opportunities for discourse. Having said that, I'm sort of proud to say I've developed a few email buddies in the players' group, which is a good thing.

Can you tell us who some of those "email buddies" are?

No, I can't.

Are those players candid with you in your exchanges with them?

They're somewhere between candid and brutally honest, particularly when it comes to issues affecting the game. Our players care deeply about the game. I hope I project the kind of presence where people understand they can tell me what they really think.

From the monitoring of pace-of-play rules to the flap over takeout slides and middle infielder safety, was there a point where you felt as if you had different issues flying at you from all directions?

The pace-of-game thing was long-term. It was foreseeable. We had a plan and dealt with it. Certainly, the middle infield slides came up in a hurry. It was absolutely a surprise. It's just one of those things you have to deal with.

In light of some recent incidents that have made headlines, how important is it that you have a new domestic violence policy in place?

Put any individual case to one side. I thought it was important for us to get out front with a policy as a statement to our fans and the public that we understand how serious this issue is. We want to be a leader in terms of doing the right thing.

Another issue that's generated debate and some criticism is MLB's association with DraftKings, the fantasy site. What's your take on that?

I continue to be comfortable with our relationship with DraftKings, and I think you will see the major players in the fantasy space respond in a positive way to make fantasy games even better.

If you had to list your priorities for 2016, what would they be?

Obviously, the CBA is first and most important. Secondly, I think early in the year, we need to make a decision on what we're going to do with respect to BAM Tech -- whether we're going to keep the business and grow it ourselves or take a partner in the business. That's a real priority for me, because I believe that decision relates to all these important issues on how the game is going to be distributed moving forward. I'm very interested in not losing momentum on pace of play. I think pace of play is kind of like dandelions on your lawn. You have to pay attention to it all the time. And I'm really intent on finishing up the streaming deals [with Regional Sports Networks]. It's important for all the clubs to make games available in-market on multiple devices. Last of all -- and I can't leave this out -- I was really excited about our announcement with Le TV in China. I hope to have additional localized partnerships in countries that are of particular significant to us.

Do you see expansion -- possibly internationally -- as a possibility down the road?

I see our business as a growth business. It's not a this-week or this-year issue. But over the long haul I think we should be looking to expand, and there are international sites that would be intriguing for us.

Finally, on the subject of collective bargaining, what's the likelihood you can negotiate a labor deal with the Players Association without significant rancor?

I'm a CBA optimist. We've developed a strong and mature relationship with the MLBPA. I think the players are doing great, and the owners are happy with the economics. I think there's enough money in the game that we can find a way to make a new agreement.